

Helpful Tips for Creating a Successful Wellness Policy

Local wellness policies are an important tool for parents, local education agencies and school districts in promoting student wellness, preventing and reducing childhood obesity, and providing assurance that school meal nutrition guidelines meet the minimum federal school meal standards. Section 204 of the ***Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010***, Public Law 111-296, expands the scope of wellness policies; brings in additional stakeholders in its development, implementation and review; and requires public updates on the content and implementation of the wellness policies.

- The wellness committee should consist of people that really want to be involved in improving the wellness of the community.
- Try to get as many teachers, parents, students, and individuals from the community involved so they can voice their concern. It is important to get ideas from people that belong from different areas. Getting principals and superintendents involved would be ideal.
- A wellness committee may consist of a large group of people, but be sure to designate a person who is actually going to update the policy for the committee to review.
- Students are our biggest concern, but do not forget that adults can also be affected by local wellness policies. Therefore, it is encouraged to include goals concerning teachers and people within the community.
- Before moving into the implementation phase, make sure the first phase of setting your goals for all required topics are complete. Make sure all your wellness goals are clearly stated in the wellness policy and most importantly make sure they are measurable goals. Do not start off writing a large amount of goals, start small and build your way up.
- Discuss with your wellness committee the most efficient way to update the public (students, parents, teachers, and the community) on wellness policy changes and implementation.
- Eventually, the Wellness Policy will have to be reviewed and evaluated to see if goals are being completed. Discuss with the committee the best way to express to executive authorities or school boards the status of the wellness policy. There has to be proof to show individuals that your wellness policy is actually improving, and if not, it shows what areas need more work.

The State Agency is here to help if any questions arise concerning your wellness policy. The main contact for Wellness Policies is Brittany Dale. She can be reached by email at bdale@doe.in.gov, by phone at 317-234-2375, or call toll free at 1-800-537-1142 (ext. 42375).